

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, applicants appreciate the courtesy extended to Patrick G. Burns and Mr. Rick Habben on September 10, 2004, by telephone. The outstanding rejection, particularly with respect to the examiner's response to applicants' previous arguments (§ 10 of the office action) were discussed, without reaching agreement. Applicants' attorney proposed some claim amendments at that time, which after further consideration have not been made. The substance of the discussion at the interview is reflected in the following remarks.

Independent claim 1 stands rejected under § 102(c) on the basis of Soultanian '092, and independent claim 17 stands rejected under § 103 on the basis of Soultanian '092 and Wahl '587. In response to applicants' June 21, 2004 argument, the examiner asserts that "the stationary piece laminations [of Soultanian '092], the spacer 48 and the pivot 20 are integrally connected and are considered one stationary piece."

The examiner's argument is not erroneous because it is not directed to the claim language.

Claims 1 and 17 recite, among other things, that the laminations of the stationary piece themselves are hingedly secured by interlocking the moving piece laminations directly with the stationary piece laminations. Since the claim language recites that the moving piece laminations are directly interlocked with the stationary piece laminations, the examiner's argument combining various parts of the reference to define "one

stationary piece” are inapposite, because the claims are directed to features of the laminations themselves, and reference plainly does not disclose interlocking laminations directly with other laminations to form a hinge. For this reason, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections, and the rejections of the related dependent claims, is respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

By 

Patrick G. Burns
Registration No. 29,367

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300 South Wacker Drive
Suite 2500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: 312.360.0080
Facsimile: 312.360.9315
Customer No. 24978
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